DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 473 417 EA 032 354

AUTHOR	Sze-yin, Yeung; Tak-shing, Lam; Wai-shing, Li
TITLE	A Collaborative Action Research Plan for Professional and Curriculum Development: A Research Proposal.
PUB DATE	2000-01-00
NOTE	18p.; Paper presented at the International Congress for School Effectiveness and Improvement (13th, Tai Po, Hong Kong, January 4-8, 2000).
PUB TYPE	Reports - Research (143) -- Speeches/Meeting Papers (150)
EDRS PRICE	EDRS Price MF01 Plus Postage. PC Not Available from EDRS
DESCRIPTORS	Action Research; *Curriculum Development; Educational Research; Elementary Secondary Education; *Faculty Development; *Global Approach; Higher Education; *Inservice Teacher Education; International Educational Exchange; Participatory Research; Reflective Teaching; Research Proposals; Teacher Education Programs; Teacher Educators; *Teacher Researchers

ABSTRACT

Teacher learning and development have been perennial issues for teacher educators, principals, administrators, and practitioners. The issues spring up from the understanding that teachers, like their students, must engage themselves in learning throughout their career. No matter how complete the training program is, it cannot equip a teacher to cope with the changes and reforms that occur in one's career. This report discusses some ways of enhancing professional learning, from the primitive form to the school-focused INSET. Underlying these changes is the shift of focus to active participation, collaboration, and cooperation, rather than treating practitioners as passive learners who are told the answer by outside experts. The rise of clinical supervision and subsequently peer coaching are good examples. This report also considers action research as a best way for curriculum development. Applying Stenhouse's (1975) notion of "teacher-as-researcher" and reflective practice for professional development, a collaborative action research on the development, implementation, and the teaching of a new module is conducted. The action research is exploratory and aims at enhancing the scholarship of teaching. (Contains 47 references.) (Author)

Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made
from the original document.

ED 473 417

The 13th International Congress for
School Effectiveness and Improvement (ICSEI 2000)

"Global Networking for Quality Education"

Hong Kong Institute of Education
Tai Po, Hong Kong

January 4-8, 2000

A Collaborative Action Research Plan for Professional and Curriculum Development: A Research Proposal

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
☑ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL IN MICROFICHE, AND IN ELECTRONIC MEDIA FOR ERIC COLLECTION SUBSCRIBERS ONLY, HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
Y. SZE-YIN
TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
2A

By

Ms Yeung Sze-yin Mr. Lam Tak-shing Mr. Li Wai-shing
[Email: syyeung@ied.edu.hk tslam@ied.edu.hk wsli@ied.edu.hk]

Department of Curriculum and Instruction
Hong Kong Institute of Education

EA 032 354

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Paper abstract: Teacher learning and development has been perennial issue for teacher educators, principals, administrators, and practitioners themselves since there were schools. The issue springs up from the understanding that teachers, like their students, must engage themselves in learning throughout their career. No matter how complete the training program is, it cannot equip a teacher to cope with the changes and reforms occurred in one's life career. This paper discusses some ways of enhancing professional learning from the primitive form to school-focussed INSET. Underlying these changes are the shift of focus to active participation, collaboration and co-operation, rather than treating practitioners as passive learners who are told about the answer by outside experts. The rise of clinical supervision (Cogan, 1974) and later peer coaching (Ackland, 1991) good examples. Also, the paper considers action research as a best way for curriculum development. Applying Stenhouse's (1975) notion of 'teacher-as-researcher' and reflective practice (Schon, 1983; 1987) for professional development, a collaborative action research on the development, implementation and the teaching of a new module is conducted. The action research is exploratory and aims at enhancing scholarship of teaching. The paper first describes the background of our collaboration and outlines the research action plan to be carried out by the authors. Finally, the authors discuss the expectations, constraints and limitation of the investigation.

I. THE BACKGROUND & THE RATIONALE

Introduction

Teacher learning and development has been perennial issue for teacher educators, principals, administrators, and practitioners themselves since there were schools. The issue springs up from the understanding that teachers, like their students, must engage themselves in learning throughout their career. Zeichner (1981, p5) makes an insightful statement to support our belief: '.... no teacher education program, no matter what the orientation and no matter how good, can produce a fully developed teacher at the preservice level'. Zeichner's statement can be elaborated in three major aspects. First, no teachers, trained or untrained, can cope with the rapid changing needs of society during their lifetime career without further learning. Second, no teacher training program, no matter how complete it is, can prepare practitioners for a lifetime job without further replenishment. Third, teachers like other people should be life-long learners. In short, teacher educators like practitioners must continue to learn in order to participate fully in their life career. In particular, teacher educators must set good examples to their students. They have to commit themselves to life-long learning and to become life-long learners.

Major Shifts in Promoting Professional Learning

Discussion on ways to enhance professional learning varies. INSET, school-focussed INSET, clinical supervision and peer coaching are common examples. Two major shifts which affect the development of these practices can be identified for example in United Kingdom. The first shift is from central control to school-based professional development. It is common to find that at the beginning learning activities to enhance professional learning were organized by a central authority. The central agent perceived that problems found among practitioners are considered universal. Any programs to better equip professionals are practical to all in regardless of their background and needs (Board of Education, 1925). Later, a 'school-focussed' approach was adopted acknowledging the fact that individual schools and practitioners might encounter different problems (DES, 1978). The other shift is to see professional learning activities are 'remedies' to fix the inadequacies found among the practitioners. Later, the idea was found to be negative and detrimental to professional development (Jackson, 1971). Professional learning must be regarded as positive experience. Teachers and educators are life-long learners and solving organizational and instructional problems are an on-going process. The search for continuous improvement is a way to scholarship of teaching and learning (Orlich, 1989). This shift initiated proactive reforms of professional development and to promote collegial and collaborative approaches to professional learning in schools.

Ways of Enhancing Professional Development and Learning

One of the earliest forms of professional learning, the Monitorial System, was practised in United Kingdom in the eighteenth century in which older students were taught to become 'teachers' by a headmaster of the same school, and in turn, these students would go to teach their younger schoolmates (Henderson, 1978, p.22). The limitations of the system were obvious. The program is not systematic and too 'master-oriented'. This is, indeed, a primitive type of apprenticeship of teaching and is not educative. As a result of weaknesses of early teacher training programs, in-service education and training (INSET) programs were first introduced in 1925 in order to make up the recognized inadequacies (Board of Education, 1925). Besides, the Board of Education saw the need for INSET as

practical opportunities for continuous professional learning (Board of Education, 1944). INSET was later made to better suit the practitioners' needs by making it more school-based. This re-think was brought about by the development of school-based development (Skilbeck, 1976) during the sixties. It aims at how to make INSET more beneficial to individual schools. In addition, it also responded to teachers' demand of greater participation and involvement in school decision-making. As a result INSET programs became more school-focussed (DES, 1978). The school-focussed INSET recognized that staff development and school building were inseparable and was best to be done collaboratively with experts, administrators, and staff of a school (DES, 1972).

A Developmental and Collaborative Approach to Professional Learning

The two major shifts in the sixties have indicated the future development of professional learning. Since then, the focus of professional learning tends to emphasize active participation, collaboration and co-operation among practitioners. Practitioners working in a school are the key players of staff development. Outsiders and administrative should work both cooperatively and collaboratively to make school a place for professional learning and to make school a learning organization (Argyris and Schon, 1996). The 'deficit approach', which Jackson (1971) opposes, treats practitioners as passive learners who need to be fixed by outside experts would be regarded as counter-productive to collegiality. Also, teachers are given a significant role to play in school development (Bolam, 1982). Thus, the shift of conventional teacher supervision (Stones, 1984) to clinical supervision (Cogan, 1973), the change from coaching (Joyce and Showers, 1981) to peer coaching (Ackland, 1991) are good examples of the current trend. This shift of attention indicates the recognition, among other things, of an important condition for professional learning: 'Teachers cannot be developed (passively). They develop (actively). It is vital, therefore, that they are centrally involved in decisions concerning the direction and process of their own learning' (Day, 1999, p.2). Professionals cannot be pushed to work or drawn to work by extrinsic rewards or sanction (Morris, 1990, p.20).

The Nature of Professional Learning

Adopting this view of active and collaborative participation in professional learning, the authors consider reflective practice and action research is the best way to scholarship of teaching and curriculum development. We share the view of many teacher educators that professional expertise is an uncertain enterprise that will not yield to technical reasoning (Barnes, 1992; Doyle, 1980). It depends on how professionals perceive and frame their problems. Problems do not exist as entities and anticipating answers from the outside. They have to be framed by the professional who identify there is something blocking his or her way of practice or thinking (Dewey, 1938).

Schon's (1983,1987) research on how professionals think and deal with problems are instructive. He argues that 'the problems of real-world practice do not present themselves to practitioners as well-framed structures. Indeed, they tend not to be present themselves as problems at all but as messy, indeterminate situation' (Schon, 1987, p. 4). That is to say, professionals frame their problem to be solved. Problem solving is an act of tackling problem as practitioners name it, monitor the action taken, and reflect upon the consequence. That is the essence of reflective practice advocated by Dewey (1933/91) seventy years ago.

Teacher-as-researcher

Stenhouse's (1975) notion of 'teacher-as-researcher' is another version of reflective practice that has shaped our way of teaching and curriculum planning. Stenhouse suggests that professional learning is realized by inquiring into one's own practice. He re-conceptualizes curriculum development as curriculum research. His idea is clear and straightforward:

i. the commitment to systematic questioning of one's own teaching as a basis for development;
ii. the commitment and the skills to study one's own teaching;
iii. the concern to question and to test theory in practice by the use of those skills;
iv. readiness to allow other teachers to observe your work – directly or through recordings – and to discuss it with them on an honest basis (Stenhouse, 1975, p.144).

Stenhouse perceives teachers as reflective practitioners and curriculum designers who reflect upon their practice as they implement the curriculum. The classroom is the laboratory for practitioners to experiment and conduct inquiry. He asks practitioners to be action researchers to solve their own problems in a systematic manner. Elliot (1985) claims that Stenhouse's idea of 'teacher-researcher' addresses the discrepancy issue between theory and practice by linking theory and practice in a process model.

Action Science and Reflection

Another instructive source comes from the study of action science (Argyris, Putnam and Smith, 1985). Action science is constructed so as to understand why we act in a particular way. According to the theory of action, the distance between espoused theory and theory-in-use marks the discrepancy between intentions and achieving intended consequences (Argyris, Putnam and Smith, 1985, p.80-82). The discrepancy shows the gap between rhetoric and reality. By taking a critical stance and taking action of planned inquiry of our action, practitioners can better understanding the relationship of their own performance and the value system that determines their performance (Tripp, 1998). It is a way to enhance professional learning and self-empowerment by knowing why we act and by understanding why we can perform what we intend act.

The importance of examination of rhetoric and reality is not easy to understand. Polanyi (1966) alerts us of tacit knowledge. Most of teachers' practical knowledge and professional practices are implicit and tacit. Tacit knowledge refers to the kind of understanding that cannot be spoken or articulated. It lies close to the heart of many kinds of artistic expertise, routine work and professional judgement. Conscious effort is needed to make such tacit understanding explicit. Without systematic scrutiny of our tacit knowledge held inside our belief system, it is difficult to understand why practitioners would perform in a particular way. This kind of reflection and examination will also be helpful in understanding the specific context and constrains which hinder our practice.

Action Research

Action research (also known as teacher action research, teacher-led inquiry, or classroom-based inquiry) is the process by which teachers use research techniques to investigate their practices. It has been defined as 'the study of a social situation, involving the participants themselves as researchers, with a view of improving the quality of action within it'

(Somekh, 1988, p.164). It is a systematic and rigorous endeavour of systematic inquiry, self-reflection and critical examination undertaken by practitioners for understanding of practice and ways to improve the practice. In such an inquiry, practitioners usually develop a research question based on problems of immediate concern. In the light of the collected data, examine and reflect upon their underlying personal assumptions of practices. The entire research process involves a continuous application of action research spiral (Kemmis and McTaggart, 1988): questioning, planning, implementing action, observing, and reflecting. The research is often shared with colleagues, educators, students and other members of the educational community. The learning resulting from each loop of the spiral forms the basis of continuing professional growth.

Collaborative action research is considered appropriate for the purpose of the present research project. Not only is action research adopts a critical reflective approach to professional learning, it also encourages collaborative efforts of problem solving and professional learning. Most of all it adopts a developmental and collaborative approach to professional learning:

i. equitable relationships between participants;
ii. the assistance of critical friends with an ability to engage in collaboration which is not always comfortable
iii. an understanding of change processes as both rational and non-rational;
iv. a willingness to reflect upon and move from single to double loop learning[1];
v. a belief that authentic settings are best researched by those practitioners experiencing them direct, but that outsiders viewpoints may enrich these through challenge and support;
vi. an acceptance that those affected by planned changes have the primary responsibility for deciding on courses of action which seem likely to lead to improvement, and for evaluating the results of strategies tried out in practice; and
vii. a supportive organizational culture. (Day, 1999, pp.34-35).

Thus, the present proposal was written and will be carried out for the purposes of promoting and enhancing in the light of implementing a new module for inservice course for teacher training:

1. Collegiality and colleagiality by collaborative peer coaching;
2. Curriculum development by action research;
3. Reflective practice with critical friends;
4. Professional learning by problem-solving cycle

In the next section, the paper describes briefly the new module and the context for such a curriculum innovation.

II. CONTEXT & RESEARCH DESIGN

In this section, the context in which this proposal is aimed at and the research design will

[1] Day (1999, p.25) describes "'double loop learning" as a way of allowing things which had previously been taken for granted to be seen as problematic, and opening oneself to external perspectives and, through this, new sources of evidence. Seeing oneself as others (both adults and students) see one is a crucial means of gaining a better understanding of one's behavioural world and one's effect upon it.

be discussed.

The context

In recent years, the Hóng Kong Institute of Education has developed quite a number of degree and post-graduate courses and have successfully seen them validated and implemented. Besides these newly developed courses, there is also considerable restructuring of its existing courses (at the moment mainly Teacher-Certificate courses) in order to keep the teaching content of the various courses abreast of the current educational trends and thinking. Action Research is one of the areas that the Institute's teacher training courses (both for the new degree and post-graduate courses as well as the restructured Teacher Certificate courses) want to focus on.

The team has the privilege of teaching two Action Research modules this year. One is a module in a Certificate-granting In-service Course of Teacher Training for the Technical /Commercial teachers and the other is a module in the new Add-on B.Ed.(Primary) programme. There are two interested areas of study the team attempts to investigate in this proposal, namely, to study the perceived problems and dilemmas faced by pre-service and in-service teachers in learning/ doing action research and to make a comparison of the findings between the two cohorts; and secondly, to improve the teaching efficacy of the team in teaching action research in the Institute's teacher training courses through a collaborative and action-research type of cyclical inquiry.

The two research foci are closely related to each other. It is the basic tenet of this study that studying the dilemmas and problems perceived by students studying action research will enhance our knowledge base for deliberating the teaching content and strategies when teaching action research. Learning the dilemmas and perceived problems on the part of the students will not only put us in a more advantageous position in delivering the course, it will also better prepare us to meet the module objectives of the two action research modules—to give the students the basic theoretical and attitudinal input so that they have both the capability and frame of mind to do action research. It is hoped that through this study, the two power-generating forces leading to professional teacher development—peer coaching and action research (Darling-Hammond, 1997; Little, 1993; Little & McLaughlin, 1993) can join forces for the enhancement of the researchers' professional development in teaching action research and the curriculum development of such modules. Thus, the expected outcomes of this research project are an in-depth study of the context and process of a collaborative peer coaching, the curriculum refinement or development of action research modules through a problem-solving cycle of action research, and a study of the efficacy and considerations of teachers' reflective practice with 'critical friends'

Samples and research methods

As the Institute offers courses both for in-service and initial teacher education, it is deemed necessary that two cohorts of subjects be targetted for this study, namely; in-service teachers studying our In-service Teacher Training course (a group of 15 In-service Course of Teacher Training for Technical/ Commercial Teachers (ICTT(T) course participants) as well as pre-service student teachers (represented by a group of 20 Add-on B.Ed.(P) students). The two action research modules in this research context are the module 'Curriculum Action Research' for the ICTT(T) students and the other is the module 'Education Research Project' for the Add-on B.Ed.(P) students. The former

module has only 5 sessions and commences before the latter module which has 12 sessions. The module outline and content of 'Curriculum Action Research' was written and designed by the researchers while that of the 'Educational Research Project' was written by some other colleagues in the Institute.

The cohort of ICTT(T) course participants will be studied first in Cycle 1 (as described in the next two paragraph) through research methods like individual interviews, questionnaire and students writing reflective journals to tap into their perceived obstacles and problems in learning and doing action research in Hong Kong. As for the researchers' attempt to study, review and improve their teaching efficacy in teaching the two Action Research modules, a collaborative peer review approach (or what Barnes & Murphy 1987 call 'reciprocal coaching' – 'You watch me teach. I'll watch you teach, and, together, we'll learn about teaching') is deemed most appropriate for that purpose. It will best function itself if it is built into a cyclical action research pattern in the line of Elliott's model mentioned above.

In the 'Implementation' stage, classroom observation by peer researchers, video-taping of the sessions, researchers writing reflective or observation journals, holding weekly peer review conferences will provide all the necessary rich data both for analysis and triangulation. In the 'Reconnaissance' stage, the data will be analyzed by two analysis methods: inductive and deductive methods (Altrichter, Posch and Somekh, 1993). The deductive method of coding is used when the categories are chosen from the researcher's theoretical knowledge or preconceived ideas and the data is then searched for relevant mapping of evidences. On the opposite, for the inductive method, the categories are chosen during and after scrutinising the data so that the categories are 'derived' from the data. Altrichter et al. advise that a mixture of these methods is ideal, '...capitalizing on what you already know but remaining open to the surprises the data can contain' (p.124).

In a previous study on action research by us (Li et al, 1999) have identified some teacher-researchers' dilemmas in Hong Kong like the lack of time to do action research, the feeling of skill deficiency, unsupportive school environment etc. These themes as well as the emergent themes that arise after data analysis in this study will be revisited and if necessary reconceptualize in the 'revising the general idea' phase. This phase will either validate and consolidate our previous findings or it will illuminate some hitherto unexamined areas for our concern. Also at this stage, the teaching efficacy trialled out at the Cycle 1 will be examined in a peer review manner and propositions will be made as to ways of improving our teaching in Cycle 2. And in Cycle 2 when the subjects are pre-service teachers, the whole process will repeat itself once more. Depending on the possibility of reaching a 'saturation' state in the findings for the teachers' dilemmas and also on the researchers' perception of whether a satisfactory level of teaching efficacy has been attained, the cyclical nature of the inquiry may go on for a few more times if necessary.

There are more than one model of doing action research, as is evidenced by research literature. Among them are the Kemmis model (1980) and the Elliott model (1991). Elliott's model is a further refining of Kemmis model by emphasizing more the cyclical and shifting nature of the model's constituent stages which are listed as follows:

Cycle One

Identifying initial focus of inquiry

↓

Reconnaissance (fact finding and analysis)

↓

Deliberating general plan for action

↓

Implementing the general plan

↓

Monitoring implementation and effects

↓

Reconnaissance cycle 2 (explaining any failure to implement; and analyze effects)

↓

Revising the focus of inquiry (the original idea should be allowed to shift if necessary,
based on the cycle 1 findings)

↓

Cycle Two (necessary if there is any shift in the original idea or the problem is not yet solved)

Deliberate the amended action plan

↓

Implement the amended action plan

↓

Monitoring the implementation of the amended plan

↓

Reconnaissance cycle 3;

The process would go on until the problem is solved or, as in our case, when we think our teaching efficacy has been improved to a satisfactory level.

The following table shows the different stages of our proposed project, the foci of study, the research methods used and the rationales behind the deliberations:-

Stages	**Focus of study**	**Research methods used/ activities**	**Rationales**
Identifying the initial idea of inquiry	• teachers' dilemmas and concerns in learning and doing action research; • improving teaching efficacy of teaching action research in the Institute courses		
Reconnaissance (fact finding and analysis)	• teachers' dilemmas and concerns • teaching efficacy	• Literature search for relevant studies	

Implement action plan – ICTT(T) module	• Teachers' dilemmas and concerns	• Individual interviews • Students' reflective journals • Questionnaires on students' attitudes to educational research	• To collect both quantitative and qualitative data
	• Teaching efficacy	• Classroom observations (by peer researchers) • Video-taping of the module sessions (transcribed by RA) • Researchers' observation journals • Weekly peer review conferences (writing analytic memos)	• To collect field data through participant and non-participant observation • To triangulate with the classroom observation data • To share collaborative ideas of teaching action research • To hear 'teacher-in-the-helm' explain and clarify his acts in the session • To share collaborative ideas of teaching • To identify the 'watch-out' areas (teaching and research) for the next session
Monitoring	• Ditto	• ditto	• To collect data for analysis

Reconnaissance cycle 2	• Teachers' dilemmas and concerns • Teaching efficacy	• Inductive and deductive analysis of data found	• To identify the emergent themes and/or document the change in teachers' attitudes • To identify the successes and failure in the teaching process and the reasons behind in a collaborative manner; • To peer review individual performance; • To consolidate and remedy the strengths and weaknesses in teaching
Revising the idea or foci	• Teachers' dilemmas and concerns • Teaching efficacy	• Constant comparison of data to revisit and reconceptualize original postulations, if necessary • Review and revise teaching content and strategies	• To identify new explanations, new themes for examination and develop new perspectives for further inquiry in Cycle 2. • To prepare for a more empirically grounded approach of teaching in Cycle 2
Cycle 2 For the B.Ed. module	• Ditto	• Same as in Cycle 1	
Cycle 3	• Ditto	• Same as in Cycle 2	
Cycle 3	• Ditto	• Same as in Cycle 2	

III. CONSTRAINTS, LIMITATIONS, DILEMMAS & EXPECTATION

In the following sections, we would discuss some constraints and limitations, dilemmas as well as expectations the team anticipates for the project. As the team has finished one of its modules, the ICTT(Tech), our sharing would include some tentative insights we got from this teaching experience.

Limitations & constraints

The team right at the beginning of the module identified one interesting limitation. That is the orientation and preconception of the students. The group of students are "task-oriented" adult-learners, who always explicitly ask course requirement-related questions such as "what's the requirement of the assignment?", or "what is the 'word limit' for our project?", or "would marks be deducted if....?" They were fundamentally orientated to "doing", but not to inquiring critically. This might be due to the "surface approach" in learning which is typically used by local students (Biggs, 1992). The team sees that such learning strategy with simply "getting the task out of the way, 'to get by'(Ibid., p.10)" would be amplified for a group of part-time students. On the other hand, this might verify Johnston's saying that practitioners, working within the 'hurly-burly' of educational establishments, are not prepared to be "natural researchers" (Johnston, 1994). Teacher background seems a crucial factor that hinders the willingness to shift from being a 'doer' to a 'researcher' in classroom. The team appreciates that teacher thinking is another influencing factor. For many times during the first cycle of teaching, our team could sense student (inservice teacher) resistance to change. As a subsequence, the group of students adopts a more restricted conception of action research. Their understanding of action research mostly limits to what Ebbutt (1985) defines as 'a systematic study of attempts to improve educational practice by groups of participants by means of their own practical actions and....reflection upon the effect of those actions." Factors behind this limitation include also that of 'time' and 'course design'

'Time' is one of the chief constraints for the module teaching. Both teacher and students found five '3-hours' lectures for the module was inadequate. With this constraint, some students voiced out that they grasped only tentative ideas about action research when the module ended. With such limitation, the "technical rationality" of the students is further overstated. With inadequate timing, the teacher could hardly choose but had to accept a deficiency of the component "action" by the end of the module teaching.

'Course design' was another faultfinding issue. The 'module outline' was well planned with adequate and valid content which would be effective to expose the course participants to basic theories and techniques in curriculum action research. However, 15-hours module design with neither workshops, nor adequate time for tutorials and group discussion surely would deteriorate the efficacy of teaching and learning. The next weakness of the module design is its lay out of 'assessment'. The assessment as set for the module includes a "presentation in a written report format of a small-scale action research project conducted in the context of a school or organization organization". This assessment format might have limitation in successfully driving students, whose learning goal is quite "performance-oriented", to continue the cyclical process of action research. Besides assessment, the module objectives and content outline seem too 'technical rational' to limit the dimension of action research development of the whole group (for both teacher and students). One most explicit example was its advocate of the "cyclical model" of action research. The technical orientation which the module chose could hardly help students to achieve "emancipatory" action research (Grundy, 1982).

Dilemma

Besides the constraints and limitations, the team perceives several dilemmas.

The teacher and the team wonders if a "menu" type of action research procedure should be

recommended to the students. Action research is a name that the academics label such kind of effort. As a way for systematic understanding, such kind of 'construct' is inevitable. Otherwise it is too difficult to get people to have a feel about it. With speculation, the module teacher still suggested some models of action research to students (such as Carr & Kemmis', Elliot's). With further readings, the team notes that some educators supported this way of developing teachers' knowing of action research. However, throughout the project, the team is still wondering if it is harmful. We fear that a specification of processes, steps and cycles would trap teachers within a prescriptive framework. The result was another type of "technical rationality" mystified on our students, and this is against the rationale of action research. This is one dilemma.

Another is an ethical dilemma. As a matter of principle, teacher of the module instructs students that informants' agreement should be got before conducting any kinds of research. But in action research where most of the investigations are confined to teacher and particular students, it is difficult to draw a clear line on whether we should inform our students and get their consensus. This is exceptionally a possible problem when the research has some kinds of experimentation in nature and that the ultimate interest of the action researcher is for the interest of the students. For sometimes if we inform our students, the data collection process will be affected or distorted. The team comes across with this dilemma in our research process. We are afraid if students would ask us to have got their consensus before videotaping, tape-recording, etc. They should have the right to do so!

The third dilemma concerned with the mode and criteria for assessment of the module. If action research, to certain perspective, is a personalized activity with broad forms of implementation, students could choose their own way to study and reflect in their own situations. The team once debates about the question of "How to assess students' action research?" As action research advocates, the teacher should be more open when valuing students' action research work; but as an assessor, the teacher has to assign grades— so how should he solve this dilemma?

Expectations

The investigation would be most significant to the team as a whole. We have the following expectations:

The team expects that the module would exert positive impact for the inservice teachers. It would help teachers to increase their perceptiveness and reflectiveness about classroom teaching. It could empower teachers to explore the many underlying ambiguities, contradictions, and tensions in their workplace teaching. Appreciation of the need and advantage of collaborative action research in schools would help teachers to recognize that action research is one effective bottom-up approaches to curriculum planning and development.

The team also expects that the project would help emancipation of the teacher, the students as well as peer action-researchers. We might demonstrate that Elliot (1991) was right, action research is "transformational" in that it can challenge the professional culture of teachers. It is through the process of collaborative action research that teacher could enjoy 'dialogue with himself', and also through dialogue with others. Qualitative inquiry such as our action research would be an emancipatory activity. Laurence Stenhouse (1975) once

said that good classrooms are those in which questions are asked to which people don't know the answer – we might be successful in actually experiencing the real meaning of it!

The next most significant outcome of the project the team expects to have developed is critical friendship among us. With this treasurable experience, the team would like to verify the fact that practitioners in schools would have better reflectiveness if they could work with colleagues as critical friends, who could talk frankly to one another and trust one another. We understand that a staffroom culture with fear and aloothness is unlikely to develop collegial reflection or collaborative action research. Similarly, contrived collegiality (Fullan & Hargreaves, 1992) could hardly achieve genuine collegiality. Trust and intimacy are prerequisites of any reflective activities, including collaborative teaching and collaborative action research.

With this investigation, the need and significance for collaborative action research is expected to be verified. Personal reflection would have the limitation of being subjective and incomplete to a certain extent. Researchers claimed that when teachers are able to share their reflections with other teachers, they are then well on their way to being able to take constructive action not only to improve their practice but to reconstruct the institutional and social context as well (e.g. Oja et al., 1989). In fact, action research has a social inquiry nature (Winter, 1989). Hence, collaborative teamwork for action research is a central theme. It would be a good way for encouraging action research in schools. Through actual experience in this project (as collaborative partners as a team), we expect that we would build up a picture of the way in which teachers could work together as researchers. By sharing knowledge through dialogue, teachers could develop a fuller understanding of the places, the work and the students they are working for. In Ellis' words (1998), through collaborative inquiry, one's prejudices—one's "horizon" would change because of one's contact with the horizons of others. The teams wish to visualize this in our study.

Moreover, with the investigation we could further frame out several central themes for future development of teachers. Teachers in their workplace should have learned ways of effectively working together within classrooms. Teachers should be given time for teachers to meet and talk together. They should try to establish qualitative research habits such as taking field notes, writing up interviews, etc. They should be confident and feel competent to scrutinize regularly their own practice and influence future avenues with their own effort. However, due to time constraints, heavy workload and inadequate research techniques, practitioners (our students) might find quite arbitrary and difficult to conduct action research. For this reason, the team has another expectation. We begin to wonder if teachers at this stage, or at their first time of building up knowledge about action research, feel competent enough to conduct action research on their own? Would some kinds of encouragement and assistance be necessary? Successful dissemination of action research in school might need constructive school culture, supportive leadership as well as the support and services of an external consultant and facilitator. In the light of this, we expect that collaborative action research within the educational community would help further.

There are different dimensions of action research. Writers have indicated that action research is an umbrella term for a number of approaches. Grundy (1982) suggests three major sub-types of action research – technical, practical and emancipatory. Tripp (1987)

suggests that emancipatory action research needs to have a critical mass of 'radical participants' who can work together over a considerable period of time. The team has an expectation to help emancipating further the teachers so that they break free from restrictive routines and to take an overtly political stand on educational issues, such as overcoming inequity, exposing resistance and alienation within bureaucratic structure as imposed by local education department. We wish that the module, at least in our next attempt, could work better towards this aim.

With this investigation, the team expects that there are great capacity and room for further refinement of the theory and methodology of action research. This extends in multiple perspectives from what teachers engaged in with their own individual forms of action research, rooted in the specifics of their classroom situations, towards more elaborated forms. For example, action researchers could identify influences from Eisner's ideas about educational connoisseurship and criticism (Eisner, 1979), and from many of the recent ideas about how professionals think in action, and how the insights of teachers can be embodied in stories and narratives.

Final but not least, the project further reinforced the belief of the team that action research has prominent influence and relationship with curriculum reform in the new millenium. Its significance in a school-based innovative is eminent. As Lawton (1989) said, action research serves as a balance between school-based development and the top-down bureaucratic tradition with teacher professionalism as the key control for change. Consequently, it is our expectation this project, and similar and further efforts, would help disseminating and cultivating the culture of teacher-as-researchers in curriculum development in our local school context. The team expects that the present study would only be a starting point. We would proceed with initial findings of this investigation to continue with the cyclical process of actin research. We might focus our future actions toward inquiry into teacher thinking and its relationship with action research and effectiveness of a collaborative approach to propagate action research in school curriculum development.

Conclusion

With postmodern perception of "situated knowledge", "contextualized knowledge" and "embodied knowledge", action research seems a necessity which represent a valuing of a 'grounded knowledge or knowing". The value, objectives and forms of action research needs further experimentation and redefinition. This piece of investigation is among one of those efforts. The potential of action research challenges that of scientific inquiry in regard with its capability to improve skills, knowledge and attitude of teachers as problem-solvers of classroom teaching; to enhance professionalism of teachers; and making schools as centers of inquiry. Instead of "out-there" nature of knowledge, action research produces knowledge with "inside-out" human interpretation. It is our vision to broadcast seeds in our local educational settings.

Bibliography

Ackerland, R. (1991). A review of the peer coaching literature. ***Journal of Staff Development,*** **Winter, 12(1), 22-27.**

Altrichter, H.; Posch, P.; & Somekh, B. (1993). *Teachers Investigate Their Work: An Introduction to the Methods of Action Research.* Routledge.

Argyris, C. & Schon, D.A. (1996). ***Organizational learning II.*** **Reading, MA.: Addison-Wesley Pub.**

Argyris, C., Putnam, R. & Smith, D.M. (1985). ***Action science.*** **San Francisco: Jossey Bass.**

Barnes, D. (1992). The significance of teacher's frames for teaching. In Russell, T & Munby, H. (Eds.). ***Teachers and teaching: From classroom to reflection.*** **London: The Falmer Press.**

Barnes, R. E. & Murphy, J. F. (1987). Staff development: Help teachers help themselves... *Executor Educator,* 9 (9), 23, 29.

Biggs, J.B. (1992). *Why and How do Hong Kong Students Learn?* Hong Kong: Faculty of Education, University of Hong Kong.

Board of Education (1925). ***Report of the departmental committee on the training of teachers for public elementary schools.*** **London: HMSO.**

Board of Education (1944). ***Teachers and youth leaders (McNair Report).*** **London: HMSO.**

Bolam, R. (Ed.). (1982). ***School focussed inservice training.*** **London: Heinemann.**

Cogan, M.L. (1973). ***Clinical supervision.*** **Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co.**

Day, C. (1999). ***Developing teachers: The challenges of lifelong learning.*** **London: The Falmer Press.**

DES (Department of Education and Science) (1972). ***Teacher education and training (James Report).*** **London: DES.**

DES (1978). ***Making inset work.*** **London: DES**

Dewey, J. (1933/1991). ***How we think: A restatement of the relation of reflective thinking to the educative process.*** **New York: Prometheus Books.**

Dewey, J. (1938). ***Logic: The theory of inquiry.*** **New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston.**

Doyle, W. (1980). ***Classroom management.*** **West Lafayette, IN.: Kappa Delta Pi.**

Ebburt, D. (1985). 'Educational action research: Some general concerns and specific quiblles'. In Burgress, R. (ed.) *Issues in Educational Research* Lewes: Falmer Press.

Eisner, E.W. (1979). *The educational imagination* (2nd edition). New York: Macmillan.

Elliot, J. (1985). Educational action-research. In Nisbet, j., Megarry, J. & Nisbet, S. (Eds.). ***World Yearbook of Education: Research, policy and practice.*** **London: Kogan Page.**

Elliott, J. (1991). *Action Research for Educational Change.* Open University Press.

Ellis, J.L. (1998). *Teaching from understanding.* New York & London: Garland Publishing, Inc.

Fullan, M. & Hargreaves, A. (1992). *What's worth fighting for in your school.* Buckingham: Open University Press.

Grundy, S. (1982). Three modes of action research. *Curriculum Perspectives,* 2,3.

Hargreaves, A. (1991). Contrived collegiality. In Blasé, J, (Ed.). *The politics of life in schools.* San Francesco, CA: Sage.

Henerson, E.S. (1978). ***The evaluation of in-service teacher training.*** **London: Croom Helm.**

Jackson, P.W. (1971). Old dogs and new tricks: Observations on the continuing education of teachers. In Rubin, L.J. (Ed.). ***Improving in-service education: Proposals and procedures for change.*** **Boston: Allyn and Bacon.**

Johnston, S. (1994). Is action research a natural process for teachers? *Educational Action Research.* 2, p.39-48.

Joyce, B. & Showers, B. (1981). Transfer of training: The contribution of 'coaching'. ***Boston University Journal of Education,*** **163(2), 163-172.**

Kemmis, S. (1980). *Action research in retrospect and prospect,* mimeo presented at the Annual General meeting of the Australian Association for Research in Education, Sydney, November, 1980.

Kemmis, S. & McTaggart, R. (Eds.).(1988). ***The action research planner.*** **(3rd ed.). Geelong, Australia:**

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Deakin University Press.

Lawton, D. (1989). *Education, Culture and the National Curriculum.* London: Nodder & Staughton.

Li W. S., Yu, W. M., Lam, T. S. & Fok, P. K. (1999). The lack of action research: the case for Hong Kong. *Educational Action Research* 7(1), 33-49.

Morris, P. (1990). Bureaucracy, professionalization and school centered innovation strategies. *International Review of Education,* 36(1), 21-41.

Oja, S.N., & Smulyan, L. (1989). *Collaborative Action Research: a developmental approach.*Philadelphia: the Falmer Press.

Orlich, D.C. (1989). *Staff development: Enhancing human potential.* Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

Polanyi, M. (1966). *The tacit dimension.* London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.

Schon, D.A. (1983). *The reflective practitioner.* New York: Basic Books.

Schon, D.A. (1987). *Educating the reflective practitioner.* San Francisco: Jossey Bass.

Skilbeck, M. (1976). School-based curriculum development. *Bulletin of Victorian Institute of Educational Research,* 37, November, 15-34.

Somekh, B. (1988). Action research and collaborative school development. In McBridge, R. (Ed.). *In-service training of teachers.* London: The Falmer Press.

Stenhouse, L. (1975). *An introduction to curriculum research and development.* London: Heinemann.

Stones, E. (1984). *Supervision in teacher education.* London: Methuen.

Tripp, D.H. (1987). Action Research and Professional Development, in Hughes, P. (Ed.)

Tripp, D. (1998). Critical incidents in action inquiry. In Shacklock, G. & Smyth, J. (Eds.). *Being reflexive in critical educational and social research.* London: The Falmer Press.

Winter, R. (1989). *Learning from Experience: Principles and Practice in Action-Research*London: Falmer Press.

Zeichner, K.M. (1981-82). Reflective teaching and field-based experience in teacher education. *Interchange,* 12: 1-22.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

U.S. Department of Education
Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI)
National Library of Education (NLE)
Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC)

Reproduction Release

(Specific Document)

I. DOCUMENT IDENTIFICATION:

Title: "Global Networking for Quality Education" — A Collaborative Action Research Plan for Professional and Curriculum Development: A Research Proposal	
Author(s): Yeung Sze Yin; Lam Tak-Shing; Li Wai Shing	
Corporate Source: HKIEd (Hong Kong Institute of Education)	Publication Date: Jan. 2000

II. REPRODUCTION RELEASE:

In order to disseminate as widely as possible timely and significant materials of interest to the educational community, documents announced in the monthly abstract journal of the ERIC system, Resources in Education (RIE), are usually made available to users in microfiche, reproduced paper copy, and electronic media, and sold through the ERIC Document Reproduction Service (EDRS). Credit is given to the source of each document, and, if reproduction release is granted, one of the following notices is affixed to the document.

If permission is granted to reproduce and disseminate the identified document, please CHECK ONE of the following three options and sign in the indicated space following.

The sample sticker shown below will be affixed to all Level 1 documents	The sample sticker shown below will be affixed to all Level 2A documents	The sample sticker shown below will be affixed to a 2B documents
PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY SAMPLE TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)	PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL IN MICROFICHE, AND IN ELECTRONIC MEDIA FOR ERIC COLLECTION SUBSCRIBERS ONLY, HAS BEEN GRANTED BY SAMPLE TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)	PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL IN MICROFICHE ONLY HAS BEEN GRANTE SAMPLE TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
Level 1	Level 2A	Level 2B
↑ ☐	↑ ☑	↑ ☐
Check here for Level 1 release, permitting reproduction and dissemination in microfiche or other ERIC archival media (e.g. electronic) *and* paper copy.	Check here for Level 2A release, permitting reproduction and dissemination in microfiche and in electronic media for ERIC archival collection subscribers only	Check here for Level 2B release, permitting reprod and dissemination in microfiche only

Documents will be processed as indicated provided reproduction quality permits.

If permission to reproduce is granted, but no box is checked, documents will be processed at Level 1.

I hereby grant to the Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC) nonexclusive permission to reproduce and disseminate this document as indicated above. Reproduction from the ERIC microfiche, or electronic media by persons other than ERIC employees and its system contractors requires permission from the copyright holder. Exception is made for non-

profit reproduction by libraries and other service agencies to satisfy information needs of educators in response to discrete inquiries.

Signature: D. C. Y	Printed Name/Position/Title: Evan S.Y. Yip/Lecturer (Mr.
Organization/Address: HK. Hong Kong Institute of Education, Tai Po, Lo Ping Rd, Hong Kong.	Telephone: 2948 7553 (H.K.) Fax: 2948 7563 (H.K.)
	E-mail Address: syyip@ied.edu.hk Date: 26-8-2002

III. DOCUMENT AVAILABILITY INFORMATION (FROM NON-ERIC SOURCE):

If permission to reproduce is not granted to ERIC, or, if you wish ERIC to cite the availability of the document from another source, please provide the following information regarding the availability of the document. (ERIC will not announce a document unless it is publicly available, and a dependable source can be specified. Contributors should also be aware that ERIC selection criteria are significantly more stringent for documents that cannot be made available through EDRS.)

Publisher/Distributor:
Address:
Price:

IV. REFERRAL OF ERIC TO COPYRIGHT/REPRODUCTION RIGHTS HOLDER:

If the right to grant this reproduction release is held by someone other than the addressee, please provide the appropriate name and address:

Name:
Address:

V. WHERE TO SEND THIS FORM:

~~Send this form to the following ERIC~~ Clearinghouse:

To:

Document Acquisitions Department
ERIC Clearinghouse on Educational Management
5207 University of Oregon
Eugene, Oregon 97403-5207